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ABSTRACT

The primary function of a school system is to educate; however, the safety and security of personnel and facilities must be guaranteed. The author suggests that only way such a guarantee can be affected is by selecting a person who has the background ability to organize a system that will guarantee the safety and security of people and property. The particular approach will be guided by the size and problems being experienced by the individual school system. A qualified person with a sound program will not only help school administrators avoid frustrating and disruptive situations, but will also have funds that are being drained from budgets as a result of acts of vandalism.
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AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS
106TH ANNUAL CONVENTION
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SPEAKER: Joseph I. Grealy, Director of Internal Affairs, Broward County Schools, Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

TOPIC: HOW CAN SCHOOL SECURITY BE STRENGTHENED?

TIME: Monday - 2:30 P.M.

PLACE: Viking Room, Haddon Hall

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Since retiring from the FBI and going with the Local School Board, I'm usually asked two questions. "Do you miss the FBI?" and "What do you do with the School Board?"

Needless to say if you enjoyed the same experiences that I did over the years you have to miss the FBI, the associations, the work. Just those letters FBI — shortly before I left I was looking for a Bond Jumper who had been arrested for making moonshine. I took a local Detective with me early one morning and hit the house where he was staying. The Detective went to the front door to which our man responded with "Who's there". The Detective shouted "Open Up! Police". He said "Go way police" and headed for the rear door. As a result of my banging he asked "Who's there". I said "FBI". He said, as he opened the door "Oh! Oh! I recognize your voice"!

The second question as to what I do with the School Board, I was kidding my former Bureau cohorts by telling them my main assignment was checking the length of the mini skirts of the Senior High School girls. But then a couple of months later I told them I'd given that up for a better job. At a Board Meeting one night a concerned parent addressed the Board stating that one of the Principals told him that a female student came to School one day with a see-through blouse on. He sent her home and told her not to return until she brought her parents in. As usual, the Father didn't show up but the Mother came in. What has she got on? .....a see-through blouse. The Superintendent asked me to look into it. I told him I'd keep him apprised of all developments. I immediately gave up the mini skirts.

As School Administrators you are well aware of the fact that the primary function of a School System is to educate. However, to accomplish this the safety and security of personnel and facilities must be guaranteed.

The safety of personnel is not being guaranteed as evidenced by the statistics compiled and the grim stories related through the News Media each day throughout the country.

A 1970 study by the Senate Sub-Committee on Juvenile Delinquency reported an incredible 7,100 percent increase in assaults on teachers over a six year period. The situation became so bad in New York City, the Teachers' Union made security in its Schools the number one issue in its contract negotiations.

The latest FBI Uniform Crime Report for the first nine months in 1973 reflects that violent crimes were up again this year. Aggravated assaults increased eight percent, forcible rape eight percent and murder nine percent. I'm sad to say and, as you well know, a good portion of these crimes took place right in our Schools. Not just in any one particular area but all over the country..both urban and suburban areas.

For example, during the year 1973, 139 teachers in the Boston Public School System were assaulted.

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In Oakland, California a Mother, waiting for her two daughters at King Junior High School, was shot by two teenaged boys. She later died of head wounds.

In Atlanta, Georgia a sixteen year old student was shot and wounded when youths in two cars sprayed rifle and pistol fire into a group of students in front of David T. Howard High School.

A fifteen year old Westinghouse High School student in Pittsburgh was stabbed in the chest following a Football Game, leaving him in critical condition.

The Son of a Baptist Minister was shot in the stomach outside Garfield High School in Seattle. Two brothers, aged fifteen and seventeen, students at the School were held in connection with the shooting.

Just last month the Principal of an Elementary School in Chicago was shot and killed by a fourteen year old student who had already wounded the Assistant Principal and a School Security Guard. The article stated he was apparently angry about being expelled and transferred.

The National Education Association Center for Human Relations, in a recent survey, compared current problems with those of 1970 and it revealed the following:

In School A & B cases up fifty-eight percent
School robberies up one hundred seventeen percent
Sex offenses up sixty-two percent
Drug problems up eighty-one percent

A Kindergarten Teacher at the 95th Street Elementary School in Los Angeles was robbed in front of her students by an armed youth who took her money, engagement ring and wedding ring.

In Houston, Texas, three times in one semester Teachers were raped on School grounds.

In Tampa, Florida an eight year old girl was lured away from the Tampa Bay Elementary School and raped.

In nearby Pensacola a fifteen year old girl was abducted at gunpoint from Pensacola High School and raped.

A month long confrontation between rival gangs in Los Angeles Locke High School, involving such weapons as guns, chains, bricks, steel combs, concrete blocks, walking canes and sticks, resulted in death, woundings, beatings and destruction. Several guns were confiscated. One Administrator commented that School officals found themselves using methods almost akin to Gestapo tactics to deal with the situation.

In addition to our primary concern, the safety and security of our students and school personnel, it is obvious that the safety of facilities is also not being guaranteed.

A conservative estimate of the cost of vandalism, thefts and arson to School Systems in this country this year will reportedly be over a half billion dollars. I say conservative because out of the almost 17,000 School Districts, the top five account for between fifteen and twenty million dollars of this cost.

The typical School vandal is a twelve year old boy looking for something to do. I must say they are aware of our problems.

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I walked into a School the other day and a boy was carving something on his Deak. The inscription read "Fight Vandalism". At another School a kid was displaying a poster....Fight Ecology....Someone had scribbled under it....Eat a Pigeon a Day!

After one hundred Seattle, Washington parents voluntarily painted the Wedgewood School, young vandals broke in and smeared unused paint throughout the building.

After breaking into Doud High School in San Pedro, California, four boys turned on a fire hose and flooded classrooms. They then dumped books in the School Library and destroyed a number of Band Instruments.

Vandals did thousands of dollars damage to Tacoma, Washington Schools. The New Whitman School was an ink-stained, equipment strewn mess. At Stanley School they ransacked two storerooms leaving the contents in mountains on the floor. Candle burning vandals sacked and burned a chunk of the Lincoln School.

At La Jolla, California High School vandals broke as many things as they could get their hands on. They knocked typewriters off desks, sprayed fire extinguishers and scattered papers and materials throughout the School.

The June issue of SCHOOL PRODUCT NEWS reported a survey on vandalism, thefts and arson. Schools with enrollments of 5-10,000 students showed an average vandalism cost of $12,415.; 10-25,000 a cost of $21,417., and those over 25,000 enrollment an average of $243, 952.

Distribute these costs among the almost 17,000 School Districts and you can appreciate the conservative estimate of half a billion dollars. Fire damage was by far the most expensive. Six years ago 13,200 School fires resulted in damages of fifty-two million dollars. I hate to think what that figure would be today.

Arsonists were blamed for the $200,000. fire on Christmas Eve that virtually destroyed Warrington Elementary School in Pensacola, Florida.

A thirteen year old boy who police stated "screamed like a Panther, and fought like a Tiger" was charged six counts of burglary and one count of Arson involving Schools in Atlanta, Georgia.

An Arsonist's attempt to destroy one hundred eighty-two School Buses in West Palm Beach, Florida was unsuccessful when fortunately a trail of gasoline failed to ignite.

Four strategically placed Firebombs ignited a fire that raged out of control and destroyed Truman Junior High School in Tacoma, Washington causing an estimated $260,000. damage.

A four alarm fire raged through Bowie Junior High School in Irving, Texas gutting the structure and causing an estimated $750,000. in damages. A former student, eighteen years of age, and two accomplices, aged sixteen and thirteen, were charged with the Arson.

At a recent meeting of Educational Experts at the National Urban Coalition Conference in Washington, their survey of School problems concluded that the increasing crime rates in the Nations' Urban Schools reflect acts ranging from extorting lunch money to the murder of students and school personnel.

And you know the cost of vandalism, thefts and arson cannot be measured in dollars and cents alone. The loss of the use of the facilities and equipment is not only depressing but places a great strain on the Teachers who must function without them.

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There are some doubts now as to the wisdom of our Courts in ordering forced bussing. I'm sure none of these Judges ever worked his way through School driving a Bus, and for sure not a School Bus.

If you ever feel like accepting a real challenge, sign up to drive a School Bus. But don't apply unless you are prepared to accept abuse, threats, assaults, have your ancestry questioned, to be stoned, fired on, and even be captured. We haven't gotten to the hijacking demand for ransom but we have Buses that have been abandoned. Some Drivers should get combat pay.

Dizzy Dean claims he was a great Pitcher because of his arm which he developed as a youngster by throwing rocks. In that case, we've got some great prospects coming up.

According to FBI statistics, during the year 1972 School facilities were involved in one hundred eighty-eight bombing incidents, injuring six people and causing a property damage of approximately $100,000. Schools ranked third of the twenty-six areas surveyed. Through September of this year there have been one hundred thirty-three reported incidents, injuring eleven people and a property cost of $240,000.

Again this activity is not limited to any one area, as reflected in some past incidents:

In Pontiac, Michigan six explosive devices virtually destroyed ten School Buses. Total loss estimated at $150,000.

In Oakland, California a bomb was disarmed five minutes before it was set to explode. The device, constructed of three sticks of Dynamite, was discovered between two portable classrooms at a Junior High School while classes were in session.

In West Palm Beach, Florida, a School Superintendent's car was destroyed when a time explosive device detonated underneath his car while he was attending a School Board Meeting.

In Woburn, Massachusetts two adjacent Schools were damaged by firebombs tossed into the buildings. The loss was set at over $100,000.

One other serious and costly problem is the telephoned bomb threat. To get the girl friend out of School, to avoid Exams or just the excitement of seeing the Police and Fire Departments in action. Last year, 6,689 such incidents were reported to the FBI. We had a couple of calls at one School, and through the cooperation of the Phone Company, put a lock on the phone. The Phone Company called me. "Joe, we locked in but it's a little strange!" The number was assigned to the Local Volunteer Fire Department. We caught him...a seventeen year old Volunteer Fireman.

A report by the Select Committee on Crime "On Drugs In Our Schools", released on June 29, 1973, states that we are a Nation suffering from a deadly disease. Our Nation's youth is being decimated and slowly destroyed by a Drug Epidemic.

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The national commission on Marihuana and drug abuse recently found that six percent of our High School pupils had used heroin. This means that one and a half million of our schoolboys and schoolgirls are already gravely endangered by that menace. The survey of High School pupils showed eight percent tried hallucinogenic drugs... LSD, Mescaline, Peyote: five percent cocaine: eight percent "speed": seven percent barbiturates: and five percent had tried painkillers such as morphine and codeine.

The report cited that in the last two years in New York City, five hundred teenagers died because of narcotic addiction. One boy, Walter Vandermeer, age twelve, was the youngest child in the city to die of a drug overdose. His body was found on the floor of a bathroom. Beside the boy were two (Glassine) envelopes that appeared to have contained heroin, a syringe, a needle and a bottle cap. All the necessary paraphernalia to prepare heroin for intravenous injection.

In reviewing the problem, the committee concluded that drug abuse in our schools has become so extensive and pervasive that it is only the uniquely gifted and self-possessed child who is capable of avoiding involvement with some form of drug use.

It was estimated that the trail of devastation being left will take a decade to remedy.

Now you say to me..What you say is true but what can be done about it? We are talking about the safety and security of students and school personnel, very precious items: school facilities and equipment, very costly items: and countless frustrating hours spent in explaining to parents and citizens of the community why the safety and security of these items are not being guaranteed. You can ignore it and mayle you'll be lucky.. I doubt it. You can assign it to someone within the system who doesn't want it and is not qualified to handle it. That rarely solves the problem and, many times, creates a bigger one.

First a system must acknowledge and face up to its problems. Then a person should be selected who has the backgrounand ability to handle the job. This ability must not only include the knack of dealing with people within the system but also with the necessary people in the community. It is then this person's responsibility to organize a system that will guarantee the safety and security of people and property. The particular approach will be guided by the size and problems being experienced by the individual school system. I could spend hours going into that phase of it but naturally time does not permit that today.

I can assure you that a qualified person with a sound program will not only help you avoid frustrating and disruptive situations but he will also save you untold funds that are being drained from your budget as a result of acts of vandalism thefts, arson, etc.

Right here I'd like to briefly refer to another costly problem that is emerging as a result of more and more school systems now being liable for negligent acts. By having a competent person look into and getting the facts of these incidents when they occur, costly suits against the school system can be avoided. Last month a student in Detroit, Michigan was awarded $25,000 in damages as a result of being beaten in a school hallway by a group of students. The principal and his assistant were charged with ignoring the situation.

As a matter of fact, with the recent decision of the Pennsylvania State Supreme Court abolishing the Doctrine of Soverign Immunity, there are now only seven states operating under this doctrine.

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One of the things Ed Brady from Chicago and I did was to form a national organization made up of people directly involved in school security and safety. In three years, from two people in two cities, our association now has members in 180 cities throughout the country. Our purpose and function is to meet and discuss our mutual problems, to develop solutions to them, and to help systems that are looking for answers and ways to cope with these problems.

From the response we have received in such a short period of time, it is obvious that there is a dire need for help and assistance in this area.

In dealing with outside agencies the one most frequently involved is the local police agency. We can write off our responsibilities very easily by letting some other agency worry about our problems but this doesn't really solve anything. The suspended or expelled child is put on the street and immediately becomes a community problem: many times winding up in the criminal justice system. If he gets before the Judge, he'll just refer him back to the school. I think we have to face up to this by coming up with alternatives. Don't get me wrong.. some children have to be removed from a class if the class is to continue but there should be some other options as opposed to dumping him out onto the street. Necessary funds should be provided for such varied programs.

How many times have I heard a principal say "Mr. Grealy, I don't want to put this boy out but my school can't function with him in class. If I call the police the judge will have ordered him back into my school, either the same day, of by the latest, the following day. I don't want that boy out on the street because I know he'll either find trouble or trouble will find him and he'll soon become another prison inmate. I want to keep him in school but I have to have some place and some program to put him into."

In Florida, our legislature did face up to this by enacting a "Safe Schools Act." This legislation provides funds for each of the county school systems to develop programs emphasizing positive educational alternatives for disruptive youngsters and for protective measures to provide physical safeguards for students, faculty and school property.

You are probably aware of the pending federal legislation on safe schools. Fate has not smiled on this or hardly any other legislation .. because of Watergate. However, Congressman Jonathan Bingham, author of the House bill, has not relaxed. Under date of December 14, 1973, he introduced a bill known as "The Safe Schools Study Act." It would require HEW to conduct a full and complete study to determine the extent of the problem of crime in our nation's schools and evaluate the most practicable and effective solutions to school crime. The study would also measure the dollars lost and the psychological detriment that such crime is causing in the country's public schools. In addition, it is felt the study will reveal the best methods for local school officials to handle this problem in their school district.

In connection with his relentless drive to make congress aware of our problems and need for help, Congressman Bingham has instituted a campaign wherein he is submitting a pertinent item into the Congressional Record each day. He is fighting for us and we should help and support his efforts.

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Personally, I'm about ready to go back to the mini skirts and see-through blouses, but seriously it is a challenging and interesting experience. Fortunately, the attitudes and accomplishments of the majority of the students are great and a pleasure to be associated with. However, that small percentage of troublemakers can wreak a lot of damage but like the prodigal son we can't give up on them.

I know safety of people and property is only one phase of the many responsibilities you are charged with as school administrators but I also know the serious obligations it imposes because it does deal with the lives and welfare of students and faculty and your continuing efforts to provide a normal school program that will insure quality education to your students.